

CUSTOMER NO.: 24498**Serial No. 10/021,285**

Reply to Office Action dated: 05/17/07

Response dated: 08/07/07

**PATENT
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In the Office Action, the Examiner stated that claims 1-22 are pending in the application and that claims 1, 5-11 and 16-22 stand rejected. The Examiner further stated that claims 2-4 and 13-15 are objected to. By this response claims 1 and 12 are cancelled and claims 2, 5, 9-10, 13, 16 and 20-21 are amended.

In view of the amendments presented above and the following discussion, the Applicant respectfully submits that none of these claims now pending in the application are rendered obvious under the provisions of 35 U.S.C. § 103. Thus the Applicant believes that all of these claims are now in allowable form.

Rejections**A. 35 U.S.C. § 103**

It should be noted that the applicants are not conceding in this application that the amended claims in their prior form are not patentable over the art cited by the Examiner, as the present claim amendments have been made only to facilitate expeditious prosecution of the application. The applicants respectfully reserve the right to pursue these and other claims in one or more continuations and/or divisional patent applications.

In the office action, claims 2-4 and claims 13-15 stand objected to as being dependent upon a rejected base claim, but would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims (Office Action dated May 17, 2007, p. 5, paragraph 4). Claims 2 and 13 have been amended in a way believed to overcome the objection. Accordingly, claims 2 and 13 are believed to be in condition for allowance.

Moreover, claims 3-4 and 14-15 are believed to be in condition for allowance due at least to their dependencies from claims 2 and 13, respectively.

In the Office Action, claims 1, 5-8, 10-12, 16-19, 21 and 22 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent No. 6,898,246 to Katayama (hereinafter 'Katayama') in view of U.S. Patent No. 5,786,858 to Yagasaki, et al. (hereinafter 'Yagasaki'). Claims 1 and 12 have been canceled without prejudice. In addition, claims 5-8, 10, 11, 16-19, 21 and 22 are believed to be patentable due at least to their dependencies from claims 2 and 13.

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Furthermore, in the Office Action, claims 9 and 20 stand rejected as being unpatentable over Katayama in view of Yagasaki in further view of Tanabe (U.S. Patent No. 6,876,812). As discussed above, claims 2 and 13 are believed to be patentable for at least the reasons stated. Accordingly, claims 9 and 20 are patentable due at least to their dependencies from claims 2 and 13, respectively.

The Applicant reserves the right to establish the patentability of each of the claims individually in subsequent prosecution.

Conclusion

The Applicant would like to thank the Examiner for the indication of allowable subject matter. Thus and for at least the reasons recited above, the Applicant submits that none of the claims, presently in the application, are rendered obvious under the provisions of 35 U.S.C. § 103. Consequently, the Applicant believes that all these claims are presently in condition for allowance. Accordingly, both reconsideration of this application and its swift passage to issue are earnestly solicited.

If however, the Examiner believes that there are any unresolved issues requiring adverse final action in any of the claims now pending in the application, or if the Examiner believes a telephone interview would expedite the prosecution of the subject application to completion, it is respectfully requested that the Examiner telephone the undersigned.

No fee is believed due. However, if a fee is due, please charge the additional fee to Deposit Account No. 07-0832.

Respectfully submitted,

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